

## Romans 8:18-27

Romans 8:18-27 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (19) For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; (21) because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. (23) Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. (24) For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? (25) But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. (26) Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (27) Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

### Questions On The Text

#### How do our sufferings compare with our future glory?

Verse 18: There is no comparison. Although we may suffer for our faith in this life, there is absolutely no comparison between our present suffering and our future glory. Two things need to be understood here. First, Paul knew what it was like to suffer for the gospel. For a summary of his experiences, see 2 Corinthians 1:8-10; 11:22-33.

Second, although the glory will be revealed in us because we are sons of God, we don't know exactly what that is. There are certain things that we do know. For instance, we will have resurrection bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-44); we will be like Jesus (1 John 3:2); we will have authority (Luke 19:17). But even though there is a smattering of information in the New Testament on our future glory, God is keeping the exact details to Himself, at least for now. (See 1 Corinthians 2:9)

#### What is creation earnestly expecting?

Verses 19-22: All creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. The words "earnest expectation" mean "eager craning forward or stretching of the neck" giving us a word-picture portraying enthusiasm. The revealing of the sons of God is something that is most eagerly expected by all of creation, as Paul further illustrates with the analogy of a woman having birth pangs. At the stage of pregnancy when a woman is experiencing birth pangs, she knows that the time is near, and she can't wait to give birth.

#### What has creation been subjected to?

Verses: 20-21: Until the day when the sons of God are finally revealed, all creation has been subjected to futility. The basic meaning of the word "futility" is the frustration of being unable to fulfil its created purpose. All of creation was created to glorify God, but is no longer able to do that properly apart from God's crowning achievement, mankind. See Genesis 3:17-19 for the origin of the "bondage of corruption" two which Paul refers.

#### What is the revealing of the sons of God?

Verses 19-25: All genuine believers are sons of God. But in this life our true identities are veiled. One day, our sonship will be fully revealed for all creation to see. This will be our glorification, the final fulfilment of our adoption as well as the redemption of our physical bodies. This is the hope of every Christian.

## **How is the Holy Spirit described?**

Verse 23: The Holy Spirit is described as the firstfruits. In ancient times, it was common for worshipers to bring a portion of their property to offer to their various gods as a pledge of their allegiance. (See Proverbs 3:9-10)

However, here in Romans, it is God who gives the Holy Spirit to believers as a firstfruits, being a guarantee of the fullness of the inheritance to come. See 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

## **Who helps in our weaknesses?**

Verses 26-27: It is the Holy Spirit who helps us in our weaknesses. This is specifically related to prayer, and since we do not know what we should pray for, the Spirit Himself intercedes. This is, no doubt, another way of describing praying in the Spirit, which is speaking in tongues. See Jude 20; 1 Corinthians 14:2,15; Acts 2:4.

There is good reason to believe that the words translated “which cannot be uttered” can refer to the use of words which are not understood. But even though, when praying in tongues, we may not understand what we are praying, our prayers are Spirit-inspired, and God knows the mind of the Holy Spirit and that prayers inspired by Him are always according to the will of God. See 1 John 5:14-15.

## **Further Questions For Discussion:**

What do you think it will be like to have a resurrection body?

What evidence do you think there is that creation is waiting expectantly for the revealing of the sons of God?

In what way is creation unable to fully glorify God the Creator?

What is the revealing of the sons of God?

How is the Holy Spirit a guarantee of our inheritance rights?

If we, and Paul included himself in this category, do not know what we should pray for, how important is praying in the Spirit?